

1998 Partners

Alcohol and Drug Information
Clearinghouse / Nebraska
Council to Prevent Alcohol
and Drug Abuse

Lincoln Council on Alcoholism
and Drugs

Mothers Against Drunk
Driving, Nebraska

Munroe-Meyer
Institute/Department of
Pediatrics, UNMC

Nebraska Academy of Family
Practitioners

Nebraska Association of
Hospitals and Health
Systems

Nebraska Chapter of
American Academy of
Pediatrics

Nebraska Health and Human
Services System

Nebraska Nurses
Association

Nebraska School Nurses
Association

Nebraska Office of Highway
Safety

PRIDE- Omaha, Inc.

PROJECT ACCESS

Project Extra Mile

Regional Council of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry

Region III Behavioral Health
Services

Region VI Behavioral Health
Administration

Rural Region V Prevention
Center

Tobacco Free Nebraska
Coalition

CHILD HEALTH MONTH

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child Health Month Focuses on Teen Drug Use

The celebration of Child Health Month in October recognizes the dramatically changing needs of youth. Spearheaded by the American Academy of Pediatrics, this year's Child Health Month focuses on substance abuse prevention. Substance abuse problems, including alcohol and tobacco, can occur at the earliest stages of life, throughout the teen years and beyond. These problems can range from children born with birth defects caused by a mother's drug use to adult alcoholism triggered by heavy teenage drinking.

The focus of the month is "Solutions Before Problems" and will emphasize preventing drug use among children and teens. While most Nebraska children in the middle school age range have not used marijuana, inhalants, tobacco and alcohol, far too many have or will. According to the 1997 Nebraska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 44% of male teens had consumed five or more drinks of alcohol in a row at least once in the last thirty days, 40% of teens had smoked in the past month and 31% had tried marijuana. Early use of drugs by children in this age range is very dangerous. Research shows that early involvement with alcohol and other drugs has dire consequences including greater risk for developing alcoholism, experimenting with illicit drugs, having premature sexual activity, becoming involved with the law, experiencing school problems and being injured or killed.

According to Dr. Charles Andrews, Chief Medical Officer of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, "By preventing drug use among children, we increase the chance of their living healthy and productive lives. The best way to protect our children is to develop their assets, the tools they need to grow and accept new challenges. Asset development takes place in individual homes, our schools, and our communities."

Over 20 Nebraska organizations have come together to promote Child Health Month and provide information to youth, parents, schools and communities. The organizations recognize their responsibility to the children of their state.

Governor Nelson's September 24 Proclamation kicked off the month and activities will include widespread distribution of substance abuse prevention material kits through the partner agencies to communities, parents and youth that were designed by the Alcohol and Drug Information Clearinghouse at the Nebraska Council to Prevent Alcohol and Drug Abuse. For more information on materials and activities, please contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Clearinghouse at 800-648-4444 or the Nebraska Health and Human Services Communication Division at 402-471-6585.

